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# Volunteers Help Deliver a Successful SDN Finland National Conference

SDN Finland hosted its second national conference in Helsinki on April 25, 2018. More than 300 participants and volunteers attended the one-day event, which focussed on the theme “The Evolving Role of Service Design”. Thanks to the interesting topic and speaker line-up, the event was sold out in advance.



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## Service design – Business almost as usual

Service design is close to being “the new normal” in many Finnish organisations. The practice is starting to be well known, and professionals with service design competence are much sought after in the workforce. With around 200 paying members and 800 community followers, SDN Finland is proportionally the largest national Chapter within SDN. Despite the positive trend in our country, there is still lots to do in order to make service design truly integrated in all organisations.

## Helping members to develop professionally

One important mission for our Chapter is to help our members to keep up with the fast-paced work life and societal developments. Therefore, we chose a topic that allowed us to track where the field of service design is going, and what kind of competences are needed from service designers in the future. The participants represented professionals from business and non-profit organizations, as well as those in academia and in agencies.

## A day full of service design energy

Twenty-five speakers added their perspectives to the changing role of service design and that of the service designers. The day was full of positive buzz. As highlights, the attendees mentioned the high quality of the talks, gaining new



The four afternoon tracks offered deeper focus on selected themes. Workshops were very popular and were sold out fast.

knowledge, and especially the networking possibilities. The keynote presentations are available on our chapter [www pages](http://www.service-design-network.org/chapters/finland) for everybody to enjoy, at [www.service-design-network.org/chapters/finland](http://www.service-design-network.org/chapters/finland). Good sponsoring was crucial for making the event happen. A few sponsors had recruitment stands and several promotional activities included fun things such as glitter face paintings and an ice cream stand outside the venue.

#### **A networking event for all**

The effort started six months beforehand. SDN Finland was able to mobilise a good crowd for contributing to the event. An organising team of around eight people joined forces with a four-person content team, all of whom volunteered their time outside their normal jobs. As the day approached, another team of

committed conference volunteers started planning for the actual execution. Most speakers, too, volunteered for a good cause, and the quality of talks and workshops was consistently high.

The success of the event was thanks to a great team effort from many people who helped out willingly. One might wonder why so many busy people wanted to give their time and energy for this kind of commitment. Teija Hakaoja, Chapter Representative for SDN Finland, said, “You give and you get. One of the most rewarding things in our SDN activities is connecting with like-minded people. The networking enables me to follow the field, give new perspectives and find important contacts. As an example, my employer agency hired a new employee at the conference.” Teija concludes, “I get a lot of energy and inspiration from our

network. Learning something new is always very motivating.” Many of our Chapter ‘activists’ would agree with her.

**Tarja Chydenius** is the co-founder and active member of SDN Finland Chapter. She works as senior lecturer at Laurea University of Applied Sciences and volunteers also as SDN National Chapter Board principal.